

## Message Text

SECRET

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51

ACTION SS-25

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O R 051400Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9735

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

S E C R E T JIDDA 0067

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, SA, US

SUBJECT: SAUDI CONCERN OVER BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW

REF: A) JIDDA 0032 (NOTAL); B) STATE 1955

SUMMARY: MINISTER OF PETROLEUM YAMANI TOLD AMBASSADOR  
JAN 4 KING DEPRESSED AND WORRIED BY "AMERICAN THREATS"  
AGAINST SAUDI ARABIA. KING'S CONCERN SHARED TO  
LESSERDEGREE BY MINISTER OF DEFENSE PRINCE SULTAN.  
AMBASSADOR BELIEVES SAUDIS WILL CALM DOWN (AT LEAST  
UNTIL NEXT TENDENTIOUS NEWSPAPER OR MAGAZINE ARTICLE)  
ONCE THEY'VE DIGESTED ARABIC TRANSLATION OF SECRETARY'S  
STATEMENT. EMBASSY REQUESTS TEXT OF ANY COMMENT BY  
WHITE AND BBC LONDON(ARABIC PROGRAM) ON SECRETARY'S  
"BUSINESS WEEK" INTERVIEW. END SUMMARY.

1. AHMED ZAKI YAMANI, SAUDI MINISTER OF PETROLEUM,  
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SAW KING FAISAL YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AND ASKED TO SEE

ME IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER (1530 GMT JAN 4). THE KING, HE SAID, WAS EXTREMELY DISTURBED BY THE SERIES OF "AMERICAN THREATS" AGAINST SAUDI ARABIA CULMINATING IN SECRETARY KISSINGER'S BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW. YAMANI SAID HE HAD NEVER SEEN THE KING SO DEPRESSED, SO WORRIED AND SO QUESTIONING OF HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE TOLD YAMANI THAT HE HAD ASKED ME JAN 3 FOR THE TEXT OF THE INTERVIEW BUT I SAID I WAS NOT ABLE TO PROVIDE IT TO HIM BECAUSE PART OF OUR TRANSCRIPT WAS "GARBLED." THE KING THOUGHT I HAD SOMETHING TO HIDE. I TOLD YAMANI I HAD PROVIDED THE ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER A CORRECTED ENGLISH TEXT AT NOON, AND WOULD GIVE HIM AN ARABIC COPY BY NOON (0900GMT) TODAY. I ALSO GAVE YAMANI THE ENGLISH TEXT.

2. YAMANI ASKED WHETHER I BELIEVED INVASION WERE POSSIBLE. I TOLD HIM IT WASN'T UNDER ALMOST ANY CONCEIVABLE CIRCUMSTANCE. BUT AS THE SECRETARY HAD POINTED OUT, IF ANY ECONOMY WERE RUINED BY THE LOSS OF OIL, THE COUNTRY AFFECTED - NOT NECESSARILY THE UNITED STATES - MIGHT WELL FEEL THAT IT HAD NOTHING FURTHER TO LOSE BY ATTEMPTING A RASH ACT.

3. YAMANI SAID THAT OCCUPATION OF SAUDI OIL FIELDS WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT; THAT THEY COULD BE SABOTAGED EASILY. IN FACT, A "QUICK SURGICAL OPERATION" WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE; OCCUPATION OF KUWAIT MIGHT BE CONCEIVABLE BUT "KUWAIT WILL NOT SOLVE YOUR ENERGY PROBLEMS." AND AN ATTEMPT TO OCCUPY SAUDI ARABIA WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF ITS PRODUCTION FOR YEARS.

4. PRINCE SULTAN, SAUDI MINISTER OF DEFENSE, HAD TOLD ME EARLIER IN THE DAY (JAN 4) THAT THE CURRENT SAUDI CONCERN ORIGINATED IN A BBC BROADCAST WHICH QUOTED SECRETARY KISSINGER AS SAYING THAT THE UNITED STATES MIGHT USE FORCE TO SECURE ITS OIL SUPPLIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST. SULTAN SAID HE WAS AWAKENED BY AN AIDE AT 7:00 FRIDAY MORNING (0400 GMT JAN 3) WITH THE NEWS.

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5. SULTAN HAD SUBSEQUENTLY HEARD THE VOICE OF AMERICA'S FULLER EXPLANATION AND HE SEEMED LESS CONCERNED THAN DID MAS'UD. HOWEVER, HE ASKED THAT I PROVIDE HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE A TRANSLATION OF THE BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW AND THE SECRETARY'S PRESS CONFERENCE.

6. I TOLD YAMANI AND SULTAN THAT THERE WAS EVIDENTLY A MISINTERPRETATION OF WHAT THE SECRETARY HAD SAID. I REPEATED THE POINTS I HAD MADE TO MAS'UD (REF A) AND CONVERED ALL THE POINTS MADE IN REF B. (ARABIC TRANSLATIONS OF BOTH THE INTERVIEW AND THE SPEECH WERE MADE AND DELIVERED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, TO YAMANI, AND THE ROYAL DIWAN EARLY THIS AFTERNOON (1000 GMT JAN 5).

7. COMMENT: THIS PARTICULAR FLAP IS NOT YET OVER. MAS'UD HAS JUST CALLED WITH A UNITED PRESS STORY THAT PRESIDENT FORD, WHEN QUESTIONED HAD SAID THAT "UNDER SOME CIRCUMSTANCES" THE U.S. WOULD INDEED BE FORCED TO OCCUPY OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES. I THINK WE WILL BE ABLE TO CALM THE SAUDIS DOWN AS SOON AS THEY DIGEST THE ARABIC TRANSLATION OF THE TEXTS OF THE STATEMENTS. HOWEVER, THEY WILL BE STIRRED UP AGAIN WITH THE NEXT NEWSPAPER OR MAGAZINE ARTICLE PROPOSING THE OCCUPATION OF SAUDI ARABIA OR ANY OTHER OIL PRODUCING LAND, OR AS SOON AS THEY HEAR OF OUR NAVAL MANEUVERS IN THE AREA.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: A) THAT EMBASSY LONDON SEND US THE TEXT OF THE BBC ARABIC COMMENTARY OR NEWS ITEM ON THE SECRETARY'S BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW; B) THAT THE DEPARTMENT SEND US THE TEXT OF PRESIDENT FORD'S COMMENTS ON THE INTERVIEW.  
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## Message Attributes

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